

CIA DOES NOT SMUGGLE OPIUM

HON. CHARLES S. GUBSER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 1972

Mr. GUBSER. Mr. Speaker, once again there has been an upsurge in charges alleging direct CIA involvement in drug traffic in Southeast Asia. These allegations have proven false in the past. Last year I personally looked into similar charges and I am satisfied myself that they were without substance. Moreover, in April 1971, Mr. Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence, made a public categorical denial of Agency involvement in drug traffic before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He has personally reaffirmed this denial to me. What the facts actually demonstrated was that the CIA is cooperating closely with other Government agencies in a concerted effort to curb the world drug traffic. The efforts of these U.S. agencies are designed to persuade countries, which for centuries have accepted the growth or local consumption of illicit drugs, to take stringent steps against such practices. They are also cooperating to eliminate the flow of these drugs into the United States.

Most recently, Mr. Alfred McCoy, a graduate student who is about to publish a book on the drug traffic in Southeast Asia, has made the same charges against the CIA. In early June, he aired his charges before a Senate subcommittee and received considerable publicity. Immediately after Mr. McCoy's testimony, Mr. Nelson Gross, senior adviser to the Secretary of State and Coordinator for International Narcotics Matters, publicly and in detail refuted Mr. McCoy's charges. I regret that these allegations have been given further publicity in a statement by a Member of this body when he published in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of June 27, a letter he has directed to Mr. Helms, requesting an investigation of the allegations made by Mr. McCoy.

Mr. Speaker, Director Helms' denial of charges that CIA has been involved in the drug traffic has been confirmed by other senior U.S. Government officials. There has been no substance to the charges that have been leveled and it is most regrettable that the CIA must be the continual target of a tactic which serves to undermine positive efforts that are being taken under difficult circumstances to curb drug trafficking. Those few who promote false accusations to the contrary undermine the good work that is being done and the personal integrity of high officials of our Government. I can assure the Members of this body and all American citizens that our Government is committed 100 percent to solving the drug problem.

Mr. Speaker, while it is unfortunate that these old charges have been publicly aired again, I believe that Mr. Helms' letter of June 28 on this subject should also be included in the RECORD:

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY,
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR,
June 28, 1972.

HON. LES ASPIN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. ASPIN: The Congressional Record of June 27, 1972, carries a letter addressed to me by you announcing your release of "substantial new evidence that indicates U.S. pilots flying CIA operated helicopters have been smuggling opium inside Laos."

I have yet to receive your letter. Pending its receipt, however, I shall begin a thorough investigation of this alleged "new evidence" and will advise you in due course of the results. In this connection, I call to your attention the testimony of Mr. Nelson Gross, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Coordinator for International Narcotics Matters, before the Congressional Inquiry Regarding International Narcotics Traffic on June 9, 1972. He there quoted the Air America Managing Director's statement that Mr. Alfred McCoy's allegation before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee that Air America aircraft have been transporting opium in Northern Laos on a regular basis is "utterly and absolutely false."

In the interim, I wish to reiterate strongly what I have said publicly to the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

"There is the arrant nonsense that the Central Intelligence Agency is somehow involved in the world drug traffic. We are not. As fathers, we are as concerned about the lives of our children and grandchildren as are all of you. As an Agency, in fact, we are heavily engaged in tracing the foreign roots of the drug traffic for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. We hope we are helping with a solution; we know we are not contributing to the problem."

In addition, you will have no doubt noticed in the Congressional Record of June 2, 1971, that Congressman Charles Gubser cited a letter from Mr. John Ingersoll, Director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, attesting to the fact that this Agency

has taken a great number of steps against the narcotics trade. Further, we have issued the strongest instructions, and have most vigorously enforced them, to prohibit any inadvertent use of CIA facilities by narcotics smugglers.

In the light of these well-established positions, we find it disappointing to be subjected to the type of public allegation represented by graduate student McCoy's assertions of "new evidence," the innuendo in which can only dishearten CIA personnel of honor and integrity working against this nefarious trade.

I have taken the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to Congressman Gubser because of his interest in these matters.

Sincerely,

RICHARD HELMS, Director.

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Approved For Release 2005/01/27 : CIA-RDP74B00415R000300230076-7

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Acting Legislative Counsel

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3 July 1972

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COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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Executive Director

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Attached is an extract from the Congressional Record containing a statement by Representative Charles Gubser (R., Calif.) refuting allegations of Agency involvement in the drug traffic in Southeast Asia and the Director's response to a letter from Representative Les Aspin (D., Wis.) on this subject (which we still have not received).

Acting Legislative Counsel

cc: DCI, DDCI, Ex/Dir, DDI, DDP, DDS&T, DDS, D/DCI/IC, D/ONE, OGC, IG, D/OCI, SAVA, Messrs. Thuermer,